Opinion

'Anything goes'

A self-employed person explained why he doesn't pay the wage tax in Carbondale. "Why should I?" he asked. "What do I get in return for my money? I pay property taxes because I get a tax notice, but nobody has ever asked me to pay the wage tax."

Another person, showing off some remodeling work that had been done, was asked if he had obtained a building permit. "What for?" he laughed. "This is Carbondale. You don't need one in Carbondale. You can get away with anything here. Anything goes."

That statement – that one can get away with just about anything in Carbondale – may not be entirely correct, but it's not too far from the truth. The fact of the matter is that traditionally, the laws which govern Carbondale have been nothing but words on pieces of paper. They are not enforced uniformly, if they are enforced at all.

The problem rests with an apathetic public and the public's nonchalance has been reflected by their elected representatives, the mayor and city council, and by a majority of city employees.

When Carbondale adopted the Home Rule Charter, that document plus the administrative code and the various city ordinances became the "law of the land" as far as Carbondaleans were concerned. However, since the charter was adopted, public officials have habitually violated the law themselves by ignoring whatever section doesn't suit their fancy.

The provisions regarding the budget and city finances were ignored and now the city is $600,000 in debt. We have to blame the Mancuso administration for that.

On Monday night City Council met and voted to adopt a new budget. No public notice was given although the charter clearly states that Council **must** hold a public meeting prior to the adoption of the budget and that the time and place of such hearing, together with a general summary of the proposed budget shall be advertised in newspapers **at least two weeks** before the hearing. Council said, in effect, "We don't have time for that," and adopted a 1984 budget. As they say, you can get away with anything in Carbondale!

Council points out that there are flaws with the Home Rule Charter. Specifically, the charter does not explain what steps should be taken when things don't run like they're supposed to. For example, it doesn't say what council should do if the mayor doesn't present a budget when he is supposed to. It simply says that the budget must be adopted before January 1.

The authors of the Home Rule Charter knew that revisions would have to be made from time to time, so they made it a part of the law that the mayor and Council review the Charterd at least once following the decennial census report (1980) and make a written report to the citizens of the city. Our elected officials have ignored this provision of the law. That's okay. Anything goes in Carbondale.

Carbondale has zoning laws, but variances are given at the drop of a hat. On Main Street, between City Hall and Salem Avenue, all comercial buildings must be two stories or more. So why was Lilje's Shoe Store built as a one story structure? Anything goes here.

Building codes prohibit signs that hang over the sidewalk. Signs on businesses must be flush with the face of the building (like the sign on J.J. Newberry). Before erecting a sign, a business is supposed to get a building permit and the building inspector then is supposed to make sure that the sign is erected in accordance with the building codes. The next time you drive down Main Street, notice how many businesses obey the law! Notice the job done by the building inspector! Anything goes here.

There are laws requiring parking on alternate sides of the street so that street crews can remove the snow. When was that law last enforced? Could it be that we don't need to enforce that law because the streets are in such good shape?

The city adopted an amusement tax on video games and then gave up on the idea of collecting it because, they said, they didn't have anybody to collect the tax. Hardly anybody paid the tax so they felt it wasn't fair to collect the tax from just a handful of honest people. The amusement tax was in the budget as projected revenue but the city never collected it. Now the milage rate will be hiked to make up for the deficit. Those who did not pay the amusement tax proved that nothing happens to you if you don't pay your taxes. You can get away with almost anything here.

Recently Council passed an ordinance requiring everyone to shovel their sidewalks. There are still plenty of unshoveled sidewalks. Can you imagine the police enforcing this new law? "Lady, get in your wheelchair and come with us. You're under arrest for having snow on your sidewalk." It will never happen – not here in Carbondale.

The point is, Council and the administration and all city employees have to set the example. They can't ignore the law themselves and then criticize the citizens who decide to do whatever they please too! The laws **must be enforced** – uniformly.

Name a problem the city faces and chances are that there is already a law on the books that would have prevented that problem had the law been obeyed.

As one citizen said at last Monday's council meeting, "Let's bury the hatchet and start all over." We agree. It's time for everyone to abide by the Home Rule Charter. It's time to enforce the building codes and zoning ordinances. It's time to make everyone pay his share of the tax burden. It's time to coin a new expression - - "You can't get away with that in Carbondale."

Carbondale News

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Do you remember when . . .

15 YEARS AGO

Four residents of the Greater Carbondale had been nominated by Congressman Joseph M. McDade to compete for appointment to the United States Military academy at West Point and the Air Force academy at Colorado Springs, Colo? Area young men nominated by Congressman McDade for West Point examination were: Robert P. Ryczak, RD 1, Jermyn; Brain P. Toolan, 26 Wayne St; Edward J. Zaleski, RD 1, Jermyn; nominated for Air Force Academy examination was: Michael J. Andrews, 116 Gordon Ave.

Lester J. Bowers, director of Student teaching and placement at East Stroudsburg State College, had announced that Miss Mary Ann Egnotovich of 856 Jefferson St., Simpson, had been assigned to Pocono Mountain School District, swiftwater, as a student teacher for an 18 week period?

A photo was taken at a dinner for the Carbondale Lodge No. 249? Pictured were: Donald Thomas, junior warden; Sam Pechasick, worshipful master; Julius Henry, most eminent high priest; and Arthur Daniel King, Mead Sandercock, district deputy grand high priest; Warren Williams Jr., speaker; Fred Bartholomay, Chaplain; Reginald E. Wise, secretary; William F. Fletcher, treasurer.

20 YEARS AGO

Melville Rapid's Shoe Repair Shop closed for good after 37 years on Carbondale business scene preceded by ventures in Forest City?

Barbara Mancuso and Ann Nolan represented St. Rose High School in District Chorus Festival held at Pocono Mountain High School?

Mayor Frank L. Howard was appointed by the commission to a position in the assessor's office?

City Council adopted on first and second reading, an ordinance which was to empower in the city police to cause to be towed away and impound any car parked on a street or highway within the city or upon any public property of the city?

Miss Mary Lou Hennemuth, had been chosen to represent St. Joseph's Hospital in the Lackawanna County Queen of Hearts Contest?

William Kresock, 293 Canaan Street caught a 17½ inch perch while fishing at Lake Wallenpaupack on live bait?

Patricia Carr, and Blanche Ogonaly, were awarded certificates and trophies upon graduation from Carbondale School of Beauty Culture?

Karen M. Curran, was serving as associate teacher in the Hempfield Jonture at Greensburg, Pa.?

Miss Marie Petorak successfully passed her Pennsylvania State Boards of Professional Nursing and Miss Joyce A. Dovin passed her Registered Nurses test successfully?

25 YEARS AGO

Although all bookings for the Irving Theater had been cancelled effective as of close of business Saturday, January 31, the Irving management announced that it had succeeded in booking a teature film for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday showing after city council repealed the amusement tax which the Irving people had protested by scheduling closing of the Irving on the grounds that the amusement tax as enforced was simply theater addimission tax?

The following Carbondale area young women, Marywood College seniors, were scheduled to begin student teaching for the period February 2 to March 20; Patricia Moffit, 18 S. Church St.; Valerie Petcavich, 159 Gordan Ave.; Mrs Joseph Carden, 42 Reynolds Ave.; Mary Ethel Healey, 96 Washington St.; Sally A Rabbige, 221 Laurel St., Archbald; Frances Decker, RD Jermyn; Joann Kameen, 616 Main St., Forest City; Mary Ann Damasevitz, 529 Lackawanna St., Forest City?

The Gasparini Excavating Co., Inc., Peckville, was given a $2,379,229 contract by the Pennsylvania Department of Highways for construction of a section of the Penn-Can Highway in Lackawanna County?

Rory Calhoun, ranking middleweight, White Plains, N.Y., was scheduled to meet Al Hauser of Philadelphia in a 10 round fight at the Main Street Armory in Wilkes-Barre February 10?

Art Wall Jr., Pocono Manor, won the $7,500 Eldorado pro-amateur golf tournament at Palm Desert, Calif.?

30 YEARS AGO

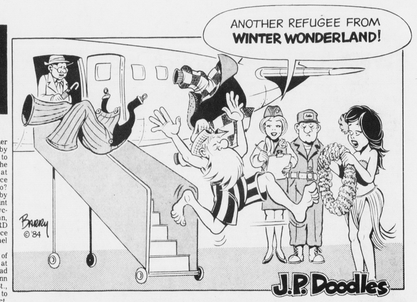
State Mine Inspectors James F. Munley and Theodore Whackley issued a report in which they pointed out that the boundary of the area affected by the West Side mine fire had moved 1,500 feet nearer to the center of the population of the city since a committee of mining men investigated the situation following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Collins of Scott St., whose bodies were found in their home November 14, 1952.

L.D. Freeman, former chairman of the railroad division of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, was named the new trustee of the New York, Ontario and Western Railway by Judge Edward A. Conger in Federal Court in New York. Mr. Freeman to succeed Ferdinand J. Sieghart, who resigned for reasons of health?

The reappointment of Dennis Langan as district warden for District 3 of the Knights of Columbus was announced by Charles M. Maguire, district deputy?

The cigar store of Bert W. Collins of 27 N.Main St., was broken into and three cigarette lighters with an aggregate value of $50 were the principal items of loot?

The sisterhood of Agudath Sholom Synagogue announced Tuesday and Wednesday, March 23 and 24, as its bazaar dates with Mrs. Avaron Cimmett and Mrs. Max Mermelstein general chairmen and Mrs. Joseph Teitelbaum Sisterhood president, as honorary chairman?



Keeping in touch

By James Laurie
6403 Darwin Road
Laurel, MD 20707

Ida Piccirillo

Sending her love to family and friends at home is **Ida Frishman Piccirillo, 2500 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, C.D. 20007.** Ida is the daughter of the late Jacob Frishman, Sand St. Her children are Janet Blitstein, and Richard, an M.D. Her grandchildren are Michael and Sharon Berland and Nicholas, Alex and Elliot Piccirillo. Ida's brothers are David; Ben, New York City; Sam, Bethesda, Md.; and Eugene (deceased). Ida wishes everyone at home and away health, happiness and prosperity in the new year.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Masco's letter

The following letter was sent to Carbondale City Council dated January 18, 1984:

Dear Council Members:

I am taking this opportunity to clarify any misbeliefs that the new mayor is charging me with. At her press conference of January 13, 1984, she charged me with removing records or other information from the office on December 30, 1983, and that I was furloughed on December 27, 1983. The only true statement of her charges was that I was furloughed on December 27, 1983, however, I was recalled by Mayor Mancuso on Friday, December 30, 1983 to submit the payroll and clean the offices. Both payroll records at City Hall and my unemployment report will indicate I had reason to be at City Hall on the date in question.

I also chose this day to remove my personal belongings from the three (3) offices I used over the five and one half (5½) years of employment with the City. Over this length of time, one accumulates a large amount of personal property in his offices which accounts for the boxes and bags I removed.

Mrs. Moro's charge of taking records from City Hall is totally untrue. I would have no reason to remove such records and second of all, I would not want them. Prior to leaving the building on December 30, 1983, I asked City Clerk Mary Milligan to accompany me to the various offices and told her where all records and files had been placed, both active and non-active. Upon handing over all my keys, I indicated to Mary that all offices were clear of all my personal belongings and if something should come up, please hold it for me.

In charge of not having any business at City Hall on December 30, 1983 should have been adhered to by the person that said it. I ask, what reason did Mrs. Moro have on this date to inventory the Finance Office safe, the Community Development Office, its files and the other offices? Her term of office and responsibilities did not start until 12 noon on January 1, 1984.

I hope this explains what Mrs. Moro has charged me with, and I appreciate council giving me this time to be heard by having this letter placed in the minutes of this meeting. I also hope this will stop the nonsense that Mrs. Moro is preaching.

Joseph J. Masco

Editor's Note: Mr. Masco's letter was read and entered in the minutes of the January 21 city council meeting. Mayor Moro was in attendance at that meeting and stated that she was in city hall on December 30, 1983 not as mayor, but in the capacity as a council member. She further stated that she wants Joe Masco "to bring the packages and bags back to city hall so we can go through them" if he insists there is nothing to hide.

On hospital union

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to recent articles in the papers concerning the effort to unionize Carbondale General Hospital.

Just a few remarks for the public so they may have the opportunity to see another side of the story.

According the a few anonymous employees their complaints are as follows:

1. We want to be listened to when there is a problem. Answer: Every employee has a supervisor to go to with problems. If not answered the employee may go to the Executive Director.

2. No benefits for part time employees. Answer: These are some of our benefits. 5 days vacation and 2 personal holidays at the minimum, 8 vacation days and 3 personal holidays at the maximum. Group Life Insurance in the same amount as what is available to the full time employees. Blue Cross, Blue Shield and Mayor Medical cost paid in the amount of 50 percent. Pension benefits same as full time employees. Employee discount on medical services received at Carbondale General Hospital in the same amount as full time employees. This is NO BENEFITS???

Another benefit that is a complaint of theirs in the ability to schedule days worked in a pay period and arrange to have a week off while maintaining their status. Thats a benefit the full time employees do not have.

3. Guarantee of no lay off. Answer: There has not been a lay off at Carbondale General Hospital in over 15 years.

We are moving forward at Carbondale General Hospital. Our building project is full steam ahead, which will provide us with an modern up to date facility. We have modern and sofisticated equipment for testing purposes. We still have that personal touch and quality care which many of our patients enjoy and come to Carbondale General Hospital for.

I for one resent a handful of disgruntled employees making derogatory remarks about the hospital. No matter what the few say, the majority of us at Carbondale General Hospital agree that it is a nice place to work.

"Happy"

On shoveling snow

To the editor:

I'm also a concerned citizen of the Carbondale area, and agree strongly with Dorothy Castle, that the roads are terrible. There's also another problem I'd like to bring up -- it's about people who throw snow into the streets when they are shoveling their sidewalks. This is being done on the Belmont Streets.

There's been alot of accidents caused because of this situation. I thought there was some kind of law saying that it is illegal to throw snow into the streets. Is there? If not, there should be!

Sincerely,

A Concerned Citizen

Editor's Note: As it reads now, city ordinance seven (7) passed in 1945, does not prohibit people from throwing snow and ice onto the public roads as they shovel their sidewalks.

When the NEWS checked with city hall on Friday, January 20, we learned that an amendment to the existing ordinance will be introduced at the council meeting on January 23 making it unlawful to throw shoveled snow onto the streets.

On Jermyn Lions

To the editor:

A grateful "thank you" to the Jermyn Lion's Club from all the residents of the borough of Jermyn for paying the light bill for our beautiful Christmas lights.

To the Jermyn council for storing them in the Borough Building on Jefferson Avenue.

Our town was just beautiful, to all the residents who decorated their homes, they were all a sight to behold. We all have so much to be grateful for in our borough.

Eleanor Thomas Tryon
Former President of the Jermyn Christmas Lights Committee

On fire directory

To the Editor:

I and my friends would like to know about the "Fire Alarm Directory" in your paper.

What is the difference in the numbers: 27 - Salem and Park and 45 - Park and Salem?

It has been like that in every directory, you've published.

Are your sure you have the right numbers for the whole thing?

You better check with the chief for a new directory.

Very concerned readers

Editor's Note:

You are right! We certainly should not list two different box numbers at the same intersection. We drove around and found that Box 27 is at Salem and Park.

Box 45, however, is located much further south on Park St.; almost near Russell Park.

We are running a fire alarm directory on page 7 this week, and we suggest our readers clip it out and save it.

Thanks for calling this to our attention.

More letters on page 8

What's on your mind?

Do you have a gripe? Can you offer some constructive criticism? Is there an organization or individual that deserves your praise?

If so, let us publish your thoughts in a "letter to the editor." We must know who the writer is, but will withhold the name if so requested.

Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Preference will be given to letters written about local issues.

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